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S E C R E T AMMAN 005965

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/ARN, NEA/NGA
CENTCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: UNINTENDED BUT EFFECTIVE CLOSURE OF JORDAN-IRAQ
BORDER FOR TRAVELERS AGED 20-45

REF: AMMAN 4763

Classified By: CDA David M. Hale for reasons 1.5 (b)(d)

SUMMARY

1. (S) U.S. military units on the Jordan-Iraq border unintentionally but effectively closed the border to Iraq-bound traffic on September 15. GOJ MFA and security officials queried the Embassy, seeking an explanation. Embassy officers contacted U.S. military command units in Iraq, who indicated that there was no intent to close the Jordan-Iraq border, and any such orders would be rescinded. An Embassy military liaison officer visited the border September 16 and reported that the border was open again. Post recommends that, if there is a need for more stringent controls on the Jordan-Iraq border, CPA and the USG coordinate in advance with the GOJ. END SUMMARY.

3ACR CLOSES THE BORDER FOR A DAY

2. (C) Personnel serving in the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC-West) reported September 15 that U.S. military forces on the Iraq-Jordan border (3ACR) had on September 15 prevented entry to Iraq for most persons of both genders aged 20-45 years, both Iraqi and non-Iraqi citizens. According to 3ACR sources, they were also instructed to limit commercial vehicles to drivers only, and humanitarian assistance shipments to drivers and "assist teams" only. 3ACR said it permitted all westbound (i.e. Iraq to Jordan) traffic to go to the Jordanian border crossing point. However, all persons denied entry to Jordan were required to wait until the following day before requesting re-admission to Iraq (effectively making them spend the night in no mans land).

3. (C) A Jordanian who does business in Iraq called PolOff September 15 to report that "American soldiers" were preventing access to Iraq for "a large group" of Jordanians at the border. He claimed that this group included three Iraqi-American women who carried U.S. passports.

4. (S) Embassy and HACC officers contacted U.S. military units in Iraq on the evening of September 15 to clarify the situation. We understood from the responses that a closure of the Jordan-Iraq border had never been intended, and that commanders in Baghdad would issue instructions to return immediately to the status quo ante. A HACC liaison officer arrived at the border September 16 and, after meeting with Jordanian Armed Forces personnel and touring the border area, determined that traffic is again moving into Iraq, and that the backup resulting from the September 15 closure had been cleared.

GOJ ASKS FOR CLARIFICATION, COORDINATION

5. (S) Separately, Jordanian MFA and security officials asked the Embassy for clarification of coalition policy on crossing into Iraq. The MFA asked that, in the future, the coalition coordinate with the GOJ any steps that would have the effect of restricting crossings into Iraq (ref).

COMMENT

6. (S) For use with GOJ contacts, it would be helpful to have from CPA and CENTCOM clarification of the control policy currently in effect on the Jordan-Iraq border. We had understood that a draft order was working through CENTCOM to apply an exclusion policy for males from 16-45 trying to cross the Syrian border into Iraq. Jordan seems to have been inadvertently included in this policy. Restricting the entry of Jordanians into Iraq could complicate our efforts to

promote official exchanges between Jordan and Iraq. If there is a need to restrict travel from Jordan into Iraq for security reasons, we recommend advance coordination with the GOJ to examine other, less draconian options.

17. (U) CPA Baghdad minimize considered.
HALE